

**Statement of the Chairman**  
**Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions**

**6 May 2015**

**Observations and recommendations on cross-cutting issues related to  
United Nations peacekeeping operations**

*(ACABQ report A/69/839; related reports: A/69/751/Rev.1 and A/69/779)*

**Fifth progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy**

*ACABQ report: A/69/874; related reports: A/69/651; A/69/751 annexes I and II)*

**Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and proposed budget for  
the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi**

*ACABQ report A/69/839/Add.9; related reports: A/69/585 & Corr.1 and A/69/733/Rev.1*

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on cross-cutting issues relating to peacekeeping operations (A/69/839). The report also includes observations and recommendations on a separate report submitted by the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/69/779). This year, in a departure from past practice and being the final year of the implementation of the global field support strategy, the Committee's observations and recommendations on this subject are contained in a separate stand-alone report.

Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee recalls that in its previous session, the General Assembly decided to defer consideration of several reports on cross-cutting issues relating to peacekeeping operations, including the report of the Advisory Committee (A/68/782). As a result, all recommendations and observations contained in that report matters continue to be valid and subject to the consideration of the General Assembly. The Committee has decided therefore to focus on just four themes with respect to the administrative and budgetary management of peacekeeping, where, in its view, there have been significant new developments since the issuance of previous report. Updates on several other issues are also included in Section F of the present report along with a full list of the recommendations covered by the previous report, listed in annex II.

On the form and content of the Secretary-General's annual overview report, the Committee considers that the report has the potential to play an important role in providing information on the strategic direction of UN peacekeeping and on the efficient and effective use of resources, however it is of the view that recent reports are no longer serving this purpose. The Committee recommends,

therefore, that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit a streamlined report in the future that focuses on new developments, policy changes and management challenges facing UN peacekeeping, clearly highlighting those that require decisions from the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

The first theme addressed in the report relates to the planning, budgeting and financial management of UN peacekeeping. The Committee comments on the extent of the redeployments between expenditure groups and classes in the 2013/14 period, highlighting a risk to effective fiscal discipline and control. It further notes that the General Assembly's oversight is limited to its review of the budget performance reports, long after the redeployments have been made. It recommends therefore, taking advantage of the implementation of Umoja and the related ability to generate more timely financial information, that the Advisory Committee be provided with a written update on the nature and extent of budgetary redeployments in peacekeeping every six months.

For the 2015/16 financial period, the Secretary-General states that the proposed resource requirements for 14 active missions, UNSOA, UNLB and the support account for peacekeeping operations amount to nearly \$8.5million. In particular, the Committee expresses reservations concerning the cost-sharing proposals reflected in the current overview report with respect to applications developed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology and deployed to the field and the supply chain management initiative. For the OICT applications, where costs still relate to development, piloting and testing, the Committee recommends that the costs be reflected in the resource requirements for the support account, rather than in individual mission budgets. For the supply chain management initiative, given its preliminary nature and the lack of concrete detail concerning its development, the Committee recommends that the full proposed requirements of \$4 million be removed from individual mission budget proposals. Overall, the Committee intends to keep the matter of cost-apportionment and cost-recovery for shared services under review.

Other planning and budgetary assumptions such as the application of vacancy rates, the use of the standard cost and ratio manual and the assumptions relating to official travel are also discussed in general terms, with the specific budgetary implications reflected in the Committee's reports on individual mission budgets.

A second theme discussed in the Committee's report concerns the issue of management improvements and reported efficiency gains. The Committee maintains its reservations over the usefulness of the cost per capita for uniformed UN personnel as an indicator of peacekeeping efficiency. The Committee also recalls its view that the presentation of efficiency targets be improved and quantified wherever possible. The Committee also concurs with the Board of Auditors that the Resource Efficiency Group be reconstituted and that its role in setting cross-cutting efficiency targets be clearly explained.

Third, the Committee makes a number of observations and recommendations with respect to the resources allocated for information and communications technology. In particular, it expresses concern over the gravity of some of the findings of the Board of Auditors in its recent audit of ICT in peacekeeping. The Board is particularly critical of the budgeting practices, standard-setting for different ICT products and services, staffing requirements (including use of contractors), as well as deficiencies in the security of ICT resources and data. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit a detailed implementation plan to address these findings. In addition, the Committee stresses the importance of having a comprehensive picture of the all resource requirements for ICT activities in peacekeeping, along with greater transparency with respect to services provided regionally or by the UN Logistics Base as well as transparent accounting and reporting of costs. Finally, the Committee looks forward to examining further information relating to the impact of the consolidation of GIS capabilities in the UN Logistics Base.

The fourth and final theme examined in the Committee's report relates to air operations. Again, the Committee considers that the findings from the Board of Auditors in its review of air operations as well as the Committee's own observations provide the Organization with an important opportunity to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of its air operations. Specifically, the Committee notes that further analysis of utilization rates should be conducted to determine the optimum size and composition of the overall air fleet and expects that full implementation of the air transportation information management system over the 2015/16 period will help improve different aspects of air operations management. The Committee recommends that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to report comprehensively on the results achieved to improve air operations, including on a rationalization of the roles and activities of the respective management of different units at Headquarters, in Brindisi and in Entebbe.

Mr. Chairman,

*Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse*

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, the Committee recalls its view and that of the Secretary-General that one substantiated case of sexual exploitation and abuse is one case too many. The Committee notes that the number of allegations received in 2014 for peacekeeping and special political missions is the lowest recorded since the introduction of the special measures in 2003, however it remains concerned about the persistence of cases relating to the most egregious forms of sexual exploitation and abuse as well as the high proportion of allegation arising from a small number of peacekeeping missions. Concerning the range of measures put forward by the Secretary-General aimed at strengthening the Organization's response to sexual exploitation and abuse, the Committee acknowledges that these measures demonstrate a strengthened resolve to tackle this serious problem. It expects that the next report will contain further information on these measures, in particular those requiring action on the part of the General Assembly. Finally, the Committee

stresses that a sustained, proactive and visible involvement is required by senior managers at Headquarters and in the field so that the zero-tolerance policy is properly monitored and reinforced.

Mr. Chairman,

I will now turn to the Committee's report on the Secretary-General's fifth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy and the related annexes in the overview report.

Given that this is the fifth and last progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy, the Advisory Committee has made observations and recommendations on a large number of issues, both of a general nature and on the individual pillars of the strategy. In the interest of time I will highlight only some of the Committee's main recommendations.

With regard to issues of a general nature, the Advisory Committee stresses the need to establish, at the five-year mark of this major initiative, a clear record of the goals, achievements and lessons learned as well as the costs incurred and benefits accrued. It recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to provide in his next (and last) performance report comprehensive information on the progress made towards the achievement of the end-state vision of the global field support strategy under each pillar, as well as information on the targets that were not achieved and plans for their implementation in the post-global field support strategy period.

In this regard, the Advisory Committee notes that over the five-year implementation period of the global field support strategy, the Secretariat has been engaged in the concurrent implementation of a number of major interrelated and mutually supportive business transformation and change management initiatives, such as IPSAS, Umoja and a series of human resources management reforms. More recent or upcoming proposals related to support and service delivery matters include the adoption of an ICT strategy for the United Nations (General Assembly resolution 69/262) and proposals for a global service delivery model. Given that most of the on-going reform initiatives are applicable Secretariat-wide, the Committee stresses the need for a holistic approach and close coordination to ensure that these reform initiatives are implemented in a manner that reinforces and multiplies their respective benefits, and avoids any duplication, wasteful use of resources and fragmentation of capacities.

I will now turn to the Advisory Committee's observations and recommendations regarding individual pillars of the global field support strategy.

With regard to the standardized funding model- the Advisory Committee is of the view that in both cases of its application – initially at UNMISS and a revised version at MINUSMA – the model proved to lack sufficient flexibility to adapt to the particular circumstances of the start-up mission or take into account its known requirements at the time of the preparation of the budget

proposal. Furthermore, in neither case were the key objectives of the standard funding model achieved, namely submission of a budget within 30 to 90 days of the start-up and a reduction in the number of requests for interim financing arrangements. With regard to the Secretary-General's assessment of the application of the standardized funding model at UNMISS, the Advisory Committee is of view that, given the significant redeployment of resources between groups and classes of expenditure, the implementation of the full budget alone is not an indicator of the efficient utilization of the resources provided or of the accuracy of the budgetary assumptions.

With regard to the start-up of MINUSCA, while the standardized funding model was not applied, the Advisory Committee was informed that the resource requirements of the Mission were estimated on the basis of the actual and planned deployment schedules for personnel and aircraft and that the underlying costs and unit prices were based on historical expenditure and deployment patterns of recent start-up missions, similar to those applied under the standardized funding model. The Advisory Committee is of the view that such an approach - which allowed timely submission of a start-up budget for MINUSCA and is applied within the existing budget process through which peacekeeping budgets are formulated, considered and approved - could constitute a more flexible and adaptable solution than the standardized funding model. While emphasizing the need to continue the efforts undertaken in the context of the development of the standardized funding model to analyse and standardize cost parameters, the Committee is of the view that there is no need for further development of the standardized funding model.

With regard to supply chain management, given the importance of the initiative as well as the costs of its implementation, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include in his next overview report on peacekeeping operations detailed information on the implementation plan of the initiative. The Advisory Committee also emphasizes the need for a centralized approach under the leadership of the Department for Field Support to ensure proper coordination.

With regard to modularization, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to expedite the implementation of planned modularization and enabling activities in order to support the rapid deployment of modularized camps. In addition, given that uniformed personnel are the main recipients of services provided through modularization activities, the Advisory Committee stresses the need to obtain feedback on the adequacy, quality and timeliness of the modularization services provided, as well as to conduct periodic customer satisfaction surveys and report on results.

With regard to the shared services pillar, the Advisory Committee is of the view that experience to date in the provision of shared services has provided some positive results and favours its application to other field missions. In this regard, the Committee emphasizes the need to ensure that the lessons learned during the implementation of the global field support strategy are fully considered and embedded, to the extent possible, in the forthcoming proposals for a new global service delivery model. The Advisory Committee also emphasizes the importance of establishing clear criteria for determining the optimum location from which to provide support services as well as an effective methodology for assessing the advantages and disadvantages of relocating such functions to shared service centres, including a cost-benefit analysis.

With regard to the establishment of a second service centre, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Secretary-General seeks General Assembly guidance on next steps or a decision on the options proposed. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to present, in the context of his forthcoming report on the global service delivery model, a comprehensive view of the overall service delivery requirements of the Secretariat, including in peacekeeping. The Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to build on experience gained in the provision of shared services and the work done thus far, including the Secretary-General's latest proposals.

With regard to the Secretary-General's proposal regarding the presentation of a separate budget and establishment of a separate account for the financing of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, while recognizing that this may improve visibility and oversight of the Centre's resources, the Committee is of the view that the proposal needs further refinement, in particular the development of detailed proposal for a scalability model. Pending submission of a proposal for a scalability model, the Advisory recommends against the establishment of a separate account for the financing of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me move now to the next subject under consideration today.

The recommendations of the Advisory Committee entail a reduction of \$3,285,558 to the proposed budget for UNLB, for the 2015/16 period. The Committee is recommending against approval of two of the four additional national General Service positions proposed for the Reference Verification Unit as well as two positions - 1 P-4 and one national General Service - out of the six positions proposed for the Geospatial Information Services Centre. In addition, the Committee is recommending a number of reductions under operational costs.

With regard to the Base Support Service, the Advisory Committee considers that there is a need for greater clarification on the various ad-hoc arrangements in place for the provision of administrative support to field missions and full transparency regarding the resources made available to UNLB, in particular posts and positions, as well as on cost recovery arrangements. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to provide such information henceforth in the performance reports and budgetary proposals of UNLB, as well as of the relevant missions. The Committee further recommends that the Secretary-General provide details on the budgeting parameters applied to estimate requirements for the posts and positions provided to or outposted at UNLB as well as comparative estimates of the costs of those posts/positions had they been located in the providing mission/ department/office.

In addition, the Advisory Committee stresses that, before the Base Support Service is further developed as a service provider of expertise in administrative support, there is a need for an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided, as well as of the

improvements in the quality and timeliness of the services delivered to clients. The Committee also emphasizes that the light mission footprint model does not replace or preclude the requirement for the development of a business case for transfer of new functions or services from missions to UNLB, and the submission of a detailed proposal and cost/benefit analysis for consideration by the General Assembly.

Mr Chairman,

Turning now to the numerous proposals put forward for the Service for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies.

While recommending approval of the Secretary-General's proposals for the unification of the currently mirrored sections between Brindisi and Valencia, the Advisory Committee considers that such a unification should allow further consolidation of capacities. It recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to present in his next report proposals for further streamlining of the organizational structure of the Service. In addition, based on the information provided which shows that the two facilities at Brindisi and Valencia operate as twin technology centres, the Advisory Committee does not object to the proposed relocation of the Chief of the Service to the facility in Valencia. In this regard, the Committee emphasizes the need for prudent use of travel resources and stresses that the relocation of any post or position from Brindisi to Valencia and vice versa remains subject to prior approval by the General Assembly. In order to ensure transparency, future budget submissions and performance reports of UNLB, should continue to show the location of the posts in the organization charts of UNLB and provide a breakdown of resource requirements and expenditures for Brindisi and Valencia.

With regard to the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a Remote Mission Support Section to continue to increase the provision of ICT infrastructure and technical support services to all field missions, the Advisory Committee considers that there is a need to conduct an in-depth assessment and cost/benefit analysis of recent experience in the provision such services to MINUSCA and MINUSMA. If warranted, the Secretary-General should develop a business case for the provision of remote ICT infrastructure and technical support services to all field missions from UNLB for consideration and approval by the General Assembly prior to expansion of the solution to other missions. In order to ensure continuity in the provision of remote ICT support services to MINUSCA and MINUSMA, the Advisory Committee does not object to the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of 20 general temporary positions in support of MINUSMA and MINUSCA in 2015/16.

With regard to the proposal to explore options for expanding the current capacity of the of the facility in Valencia, based on the information provided, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the rationale and need for greater capacity is not clear, and sees no further exploration of such options at this stage.

I thank you Mr. Chairman